

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for wrapping an elongated article, comprising:

an advancing mechanism engaged with the elongated article, wherein the advancing mechanism is operable to advance the elongated article in a direction along a longitudinal axis defined by the elongated article;

a web supply arrangement for supplying one or more webs ~~or~~ of wrapping material;

a web application arrangement for applying the one or more webs of wrapping material to the elongated article so as to form an overlapping area of the wrapping material at an overlap location; and

a bonding arrangement for bonding the overlapping area of the one or more webs together to secure the one or more webs about the elongated article, wherein the bonding arrangement includes application means upstream of the overlap location for applying a bond-forming agent to the overlapping area of the wrapping material; an internal backing member located adjacent the elongated article and underlying the overlapping area of the one or more webs, wherein the internal backing member extends downstream from the overlap location and downstream from the application means; and a pressure application arrangement located downstream of the application means, wherein the pressure application arrangement includes a pressure-applying member that bears against the overlapping area of the wrapping material and against the internal backing

member to apply pressure to the overlapping area of the wrapping material and to the bond-forming agent to secure the overlapping area of the one or more webs together.

30. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the bonding arrangement includes application means comprises an adhesive application arrangement that applies and wherein the bond-forming agent comprises an adhesive applied by the adhesive application arrangement between the overlapping area of the one or more webs as the one or more webs are applied to the elongated article.

31. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the web supply arrangement is configured and arranged to apply first and second webs of wrapping material about the elongated article to form a pair of overlapping areas, and wherein the bonding arrangement is configured to bond both the overlapping areas together.

32. (Original) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the web supply arrangement is configured and arranged to supply one or more continuous webs of wrapping material about the elongated article.

33. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the web supply arrangement is configured and arranged to apply first and second continuous webs of wrapping material about the elongated article to form a pair of overlapping areas, and wherein the bonding arrangement is configured to bond both the overlapping areas together.

34. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the internal backing member comprises a cantilevered internal backing plate mounted downstream upstream of the web application arrangement and extending in an upstream downstream

direction toward the web application arrangement so as to underlie the overlapping area of the one or more webs as the one or more webs are formed about the elongated article.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of wrapping an elongated article, comprising the steps-acts of:

advancing the elongated article in a downstream direction along a longitudinal axis defined by the elongated article;

supplying at least one web of wrapping material to a web application arrangement;

applying the at least one web of wrapping material about the elongated article via the web application arrangement such so as to form an-at least one overlapping area of wrapping material at an overlap location; and

securing the overlapping area of the at least one web together by applying an adhesive between-to the areas of wrapping material defining the overlapping area of wrapping material, and applying pressure on the overlapping area of wrapping material, subsequent to application of the adhesive, at a location downstream of the overlap location against an internal backing member that extends downstream from the overlap location and that is located between the elongated article and the overlapping area of wrapping material.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein the step-act of applying at least one web of wrapping material comprises applying first and second webs of wrapping material to form a pair of overlapping areas that are secured together, and including the acts of securing both of the overlapping areas together.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 36, wherein the step-act of applying first and second webs of wrapping material is carried out by continuously supplying applying the first and second webs of wrapping material.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein the step-act of securing the overlapping area of the at least one web together includes compressing the elongated article subsequent to application of pressure to the overlapping area of the at least one web of wrapping material for a duration sufficient to enable the adhesive to set.

39. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35, wherein the step-act of applying pressure ~~on-to~~ to the overlapping area of the at least one web is carried out via a rotatable member that faces the internal backing member and engages the overlapping area of the at least one web that is located between the internal backing member and the rotatable member.

40. (New) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the adhesive application arrangement applies the adhesive in a heated state, and further comprising a cooling arrangement located downstream of the pressure application arrangement, wherein the cooling arrangement is configured and arranged to cool the adhesive and the overlapping area of the one or more webs adjacent the adhesive.

41. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the act of applying the adhesive is carried by applying the adhesive in a heated state, and further comprising the act of cooling the adhesive and portions of the overlapping area of the wrapping material adjacent the adhesive at a location downstream of the location at which pressure is applied to the overlapping area of wrapping material.